

Message Text

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47

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 IGA-02 ACDA-10 TRSE-00

OMB-01 /069 W

----- 019190

R 051058Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1736

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

DIRNSA WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS BANGKOK 22117

USIA PASS IEA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, MILI, TH

SUBJECT: DEFENCE MINISTER GEN. THAWIT SENIWONG NA
AYUTTHAYA'S

REF: BANGKOK 21610

1. FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL USIS TRANSLATION OF A NEWS
CONFERENCE AUGUST 4 IN WHICH DEFENSE MINISTER GENERAL THAWIT
SENIWONG RESPONDED TO QUERIES FROM NEWSMEN ON AIT.

BEGIN TEXT

REPORTER: WHAT DECISION HAS BEEN REACHED REGARDING THE
WEAPONS WE WILL BUY, WITH 900 MILLION BAHT?

THAWIT: WHEN ARE WE GOING TO BUY THEM? WE HAVEN'T
BOUGHT THEM, BUT WE WILL AND WE MUST BUY THEM.

REPORTER: WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE AMMUNITION LEFT HERE
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AT PRESENT?

THAWIT: MOST PROBABLY OUR OWN MEN. OH* THE MEETING OF THE UPPER HOUSE HAS ALREADY STARTED* I MUST HURRY TO ATTEND TI.

REPORTER: DO YOU THINK THAT THE AMMUNITION.....

THAWIT: NOBODY IS COMPELLING US TO BUY IT, NOR HAVE WE ALREADY BOUGHT IT. WE MUST BUY AMMUNITION, REGARDLESS WHETHER IT IS NEW OR OLD. I RECEIVED A PHONE CALL INFORMING ME OF THE STATEMENTS MADE BY M.P. PRAYUNSAK IN A PRESS CONFERENCE HE GAVE. I SAID THAT WHETHER THE STATEMENTS MADE ARE TRUE MUST BE PROVED, THAT IT IS NOT AT ALL DIFFICULT, THAT IT IS VERY EASY TO PROVE WHETHER THE STATEMENTS HE MADE ARE TRUE OR NOT.

REPORTER: HAS A DECISION BEEN MADE THAT THE AMMUNITION WILL BE BOUGHT?

THAWIT: IT MUST BE BOUGHT, BUT WHERE IT WILL BE BOUGHT, AND HOW, AND TO WHAT EXTENT IS ANOTHER MATTER ALTOGETHER. FURTHERMORE, THE U.S. IS NOT COMPELLING US TO BUY IT ALL.

REPORTER: WHAT ABOUT THE PRICE?

THAWIT: AS FAR AS I KNOW, THE U.S. SAYS IT CANNOT FURTHER REDUCE THE PRICE.

REPORTER: I HAVE HEARD IT HAS FIXED THE PRICE AT 900 MILLION BAHT, BUT IT IS SAID THAT IF HALF OF THE AMMUNITION IS DEAD, WE WILL HAVE TO BUY LESS.

THAWIT: IT ISN'T AT ALL NECESSARY FOR US TO BUY IT ALL.

REPORTER: SHOULD WE BUY ONLY HALF OF IT, WOULDN'T IT BE ONLY 450 MILLION BAHT?

THAWIT: OF COURSE. THE U.S. FIXED THE PRICE AT 900 MILLION BAHT, AND WE WILL HAVE TO BUY IT AT THAT PRICE. NOTHING, HOWEVER, IS CERTAIN YET. THE ONLY THING THAT IS CERTAIN IS THAT THE AMMUNITION IS STILL HERE IN THAILAND.

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REPORTER: IT IS SAID THAT WHEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER RETURNS TO THAILAND THAT NEGOTIATIONS TO BUY THE AMMUNITION WILL BE HELD IMMEDIATELY.

THAWIT: THE PURCHASE OF THIS AMMUNITION IT NOT AT ALL CERTAIN YET. THE ONLY FACT THAT IS CERTAIN NOW IS THAT THE AMMUNITION IS STILL HERE IN THAILAND. THE PRICE AT WHICH WE

WILL BUY IT FROM THEM, WHETHER WE WILL BUY IT ALL, OR
WHETHER WE WILL BUY ONLY SOME OF IT, WILL DEPEND ON NEGOTIA-
TIONS WHICH WILL BE HELD LATER.

REPORTER: WILL YOU OR THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOLD THE NEGOTIATIONS?

THAWIT: THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WILL MOST
PROBABLY HOLD THE NEGOTIATIONS.

REPORTER: HOW WILL WE BE ABLE TO DETERMINE OR PROVE THAT
THE QUALITY OF THE AMMUNITION HAS DETERIORATED?

THAWIT: THAT IS ONLY A RUMOR THAT HAS BEEN SPREAD. THE
AMMUNITION MUST BE EXAMINED IN ORDER TO PROVE WHETHER ITS
QUALITY HAS REALLY DETERIORATED OR NOT. WE WILL NOT BUY IT
WITH OUR EYES TIGHTLY SHUT. WHEN THE TIME IS REACHED TO
BUY IT, WE MUST EXAMINE IT TO SEE WHETHER IT IS DEAD OR NOT.

REPORTER: AN M.P. OF THE DEMOCRAT PARTY WAS THE SOURCE OF THE
REPORT SPREAD. HE SAID HE WOULD DRAFT A REPORT AND PRESENT IT
TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

THAWIT: THAT WAS BECAUSE HE DID NOT MEET ME, THERE-
FORE HE WENT AND INFORMED MY SECRETARY ORALLY. MY SECRETARY
GAVE ME A NOTE WHICH I SENT TO THE SUPREME COMMANDER.

REPORTER: IT IS SAID THAT M.P. PRAYUNSAK WAS THE SOURCES
OF THE INFORMATION?

THAWIT: I DON'T KNOW. MY SECRETARY TOLD ME THAT HE OBTAINED
THE INFORMATION FROM A PERSON WHO PHONED TO HIM.

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REPORTER: WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF THIS AMMUNITION, NOW
THAT IT HAS BEEN REPACKED IN NEW CASES?

THAWIT: I DON'T KNOW BECAUSE I HAVEN'T SEEN IT. NORMALLY,
AMMUNITION IS PACKED IN CASES WHICH HAVE A LINING, AND
THE DATE ON WHICH IT WAS PACKED IS INSCRIBED ON THE CASES.

END TEXT.
WHITEHOUSE

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